
May 26, 2016
PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

SPALDING COUNTY OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY TO REMIND EVERYONE TO “BEAT THE HEAT, CHECK THE BACK SEAT”

Every year, children die of hyperthermia, also known as heat stroke, while left unattended in vehicles. Hot cars and heat-related health risks are a threat to the more than 375,000 children in Georgia. In 2014, there were 30 heatstroke deaths of children left unattended in vehicles, the first 7 occurred in April and May. Though this figure is down from 44 reported in 2013, much awareness is still needed.

According to Safe Kids Worldwide data and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), heatstroke is the leading cause of non-crash, vehicle-related deaths in children age 14 and under representing 61 percent of total non-crash fatalities in this age group. Also, more than 500 children ages 14 and under are seen in emergency rooms for heat exhaustion in cars each year. As parents and foster caregivers, it is our duty to help prevent more tragedies by remembering to **ACT**.

Avoid heat stroke-related injury and death by:

- Never leaving your child alone in the car, even for a minute
- Consistently locking unattended vehicle doors and trunks
- Create reminders and habits that give you a safety and establish a peace – of mind plan. When you drop off your child, make a habit of calling or texting other caregivers, so all of you know where your child is at all times.
- Place a purse, briefcase, gym bag, cell phone or computer calendar as a reminder to drop your child off at daycare.
- Set the alarm on your cell phone or computer calendar as a reminder to drop off your child at daycare. You can also ask your childcare provider to call you if your child does not show up for daycare.

Take Action if you see an unattended child in a vehicle:

- Dial 911 immediately and follow the instructions that the emergency personnel provide – they are trained to determine if a child is in danger.
- Help spread the word!

For more information, visit the Georgia Division of family and Children Services or contact the Spalding County Office of Homeland Security at 770-228-2129.

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